

Texas Rising Star Four-Year Review Recommendations

Discussion Paper and Chapter 809 Policy Concept

Texas Government Code §2308.3155(b)(2) requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to adopt a timeline and a process for regularly reviewing and updating the Texas Rising Star quality standards. The statute also requires TWC's consideration of input from interested parties regarding the quality standards. To meet this requirement, on February 23, 2016, TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) adopted [TWC Chapter 809](#) Child Care Services rule [§809.130\(e\)\(1\)](#), requiring review of the Texas Rising Star guidelines every four years.

Beginning in May 2019, TWC convened a workgroup to review the Texas Rising Star guidelines and recommend revisions. The workgroup included early learning program directors from around the state, early childhood advocacy organization representatives, professional development providers, Local Workforce Development Board (Board) staff, and representatives from TWC, Texas Education Agency, Texas Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) Child Care Regulation (CCR) Division, and the State Center for Early Childhood, Children's Learning Institute (CLI).

Over an eight-month period, the workgroup met regularly to review the Texas Rising Star guidelines in detail and to engage in a collaborative effort to improve the guideline's standards. On January 21, 2020, the Commission approved the publication of the workgroup's recommendations for public comment.

One workgroup recommendation concerned reimbursement rates for Texas Rising Star programs in areas where the program's published rates are below the Board's maximum daily rate. Staff continues to study options regarding this recommendation.

The issues in this policy concept also arose from the workgroup and were discussed at seven regional stakeholder meetings across the state.

Issue 1: Workforce Registry

The Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) includes the Workforce Registry (WFR), a web-based system for early childhood professionals to track their experience, education, and training. In Fiscal Year 2019, the Commission approved funding to support the statewide implementation of the WFR.

The WFR offers benefits to programs and teachers by streamlining record-keeping of staff qualifications and professional development. For programs, the WFR:

- reduces reliance on paper files and ensures reliable access to employee's professional development records;
- reduces some administrative costs and simplifies processes for directors and owners;
- facilitates compliance with CCR standards and documentation of Texas Rising Star points; and
- allows for more efficient and strategic professional development planning.

1 Additionally, the WFR makes teachers' training records portable, which allows them to easily
2 share their records with an employer without having to retain written documentation of past
3 training.

4 Furthermore, the WFR allows Texas Rising Star assessors to more efficiently validate staff
5 qualifications, experience, and training requirements, which in turn allows Texas Rising Star
6 assessors to focus more time on the quality of child care environments and child-teacher
7 interactions. Additionally, HHSC's CCR may use the WFR to document compliance with
8 minimum standards for teacher education, experience, and training.

9 **Decision Point 1**

10 Staff seeks direction on amending minimum eligibility requirements defined in [§809.131](#) to
11 require current Texas Rising Star programs and applicants to create staff accounts within the
12 WFR.

13 **Issue 2: Adding an Entry Level to the Texas Rising Star Program and Establishing Goals** 14 **to Achieve Higher Levels of Quality**

15 The current Texas Rising Star program consists of three levels of quality: 2-star, 3-star, and 4-
16 star. Providers certified at these levels are entitled to receive enhanced child care subsidy
17 reimbursement rates, as set forth in Texas Government Code §2308.315.

18 Currently, approximately 25 percent of Texas providers that serve subsidized children are part of
19 Texas Rising Star. Many stakeholders have expressed a desire to expand this number
20 significantly by bringing more providers into Texas Rising Star earlier and targeting quality
21 improvement efforts toward these programs.

22 The workgroup discussed the establishment of an entry-level 1-star rating to increase awareness
23 of Texas Rising Star, aid local recruitment efforts, and put more programs on a path to achieving
24 higher levels of quality. Currently, programs wishing to apply for Texas Rising Star certification
25 must meet minimum eligibility requirements defined in [§809.131](#), which includes compliance
26 with the Texas Rising Star screening form for child care licensing deficiencies, as discussed in
27 Issue 3. The workgroup recommended designating subsidy providers that meet the minimum
28 eligibility requirements as 1-star certified programs.

29 The workgroup also recommended that TWC establish long-term goals to increase the number of
30 providers participating in Texas Rising Star and that TWC consider as a first step, requiring all
31 subsidy providers to meet 1-star requirements.

32 During the public stakeholder meetings, TWC received feedback expressing concern that the
33 proposed 1-star was not an indication of quality, but merely an indication that providers have
34 minimal licensing deficiencies. Stakeholders expressed concern that this 1-star designation could
35 cause confusion when outreaching to parents about Texas Rising Star quality child care.
36 Stakeholders were generally supportive of the recommendation to require all subsidy providers
37 to participate in Texas Rising Star at a new entry level but requested that TWC consider a
38 different naming convention other than "1-star." Staff considered different options for creating a
39 Texas Rising Star entry level, among them are Clear Star, Empty Star, Texas Rising Star Pre-

Certified, Texas Rising Star Basic, Texas Rising Star Preliminary, Texas Rising Star Pre-Star, and Pre-Texas Rising Star.

There were also concerns about the impact that the 1-star requirement could have on the supply of child care in rural areas of the state, where supply is often limited. If child care providers are unable to address child care licensing deficiencies, that would impact the availability of providers for subsidized placements. Such a lack of supply would negatively affect parental choice, a key tenet of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG).

Staff notes that Tarrant County has a locally developed initiative, specifically aimed at helping providers that are pursuing Texas Rising Star certification to address child care licensing deficiencies. Staff will work with Boards in areas that face these challenges to determine whether replicating this model will help address child care providers' technical assistance needs related to licensing deficiencies.

Additionally, staff notes that an incremental rollout of new requirements could help address consumer choice issues and ensure adequate availability of subsidized care. Similar to the state's county-based full-service rollout of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training programs, TWC would use demographic and administrative program data to develop a long-term plan for incrementally rolling out the requirements across the state.

Stakeholders were also supportive of the recommendation for TWC to develop long-term goals for all subsidy providers to achieve higher levels of quality within Texas Rising Star.

Decision Point 2

Staff seeks direction on:

- amending Chapter 809 to designate subsidy programs that meet the minimum eligibility requirements as Texas Rising Star 1-Star/Pre-Star;
- amending §809.131 to reflect the initial eligibility requirements for providers to become Texas Rising Star;
- studying local demographics, population density, and child care capacity data to develop an incremental, long-term rollout plan requiring subsidized programs to meet the criteria of Texas Rising Star Pre-Star;
- codifying the county-based rollout plan, including any waiver process needed to ensure consumer choice, in TWC's Child Care and Development Fund State Plan; and
- developing a TWC Child Care & Early Learning Strategic Plan, including long-term goals to increase the quality ratings for Texas Rising Star programs.

Issue 3: Impact of Certain Deficiencies on Texas Rising Star Certification

Section [809.132](#) defines the impact of certain child care licensing deficiencies on programs' Texas Rising Star certification status. Certain deficiencies or accumulation of total deficiencies may result in a decrease in star level or loss of certification. Since enhanced reimbursement rates are tied to star-level certification, the result can be a significant reduction in reimbursements for affected programs.

Stakeholders, including early learning program directors, have observed that financial instability is a barrier to maintaining and increasing quality. The workgroup recommended providing Texas Rising Star programs that experience certain licensing deficiencies with an opportunity to remedy those deficiencies within a six-month probationary period. The workgroup also recommended increasing technical assistance for programs at risk of losing or dropping their Texas Rising Star certification level. Stakeholders that commented on the proposed revisions strongly supported these recommendations.

A review of Texas Rising Star data from 2017 to 2019 showed that almost half of the 300 programs that lost a star level or dropped out of Texas Rising Star did so due to licensing deficiencies. Eighty percent of star-level drops were due to licensing deficiencies, and of those programs that lost their Texas Rising Star certification completely, 54 percent became disqualified due to licensing deficiencies.

A clear pattern also emerged for the specific licensing issues that affected Texas Rising Star status. The deficiencies most likely to lead to a star-level drop were failure to meet background check requirements (36 percent of star-level drops) and prohibited punishments (30 percent of star-level drops). For programs that lost their certification altogether, the most common issues were excessive total deficiencies (45 percent of those that lost certification), as well as background checks (17 percent) and prohibited punishments (15 percent).

Stakeholders requested that TWC consider assigning different levels of consequence to individual licensing standards. Stakeholders also recommended that TWC consider the total number of deficiencies that impact a Texas Rising Star provider's rating. Based on further analysis, staff recommends a revised structure for considering licensing deficiencies for both new Texas Rising Star applicants and existing certified programs.

Decision Point 3

Staff seeks direction on:

- amending [§809.132](#) to change the consequences of certain child care licensing deficiencies for certified Texas Rising Star programs and applicants as described in Attachment 2, Draft Revised TRS Screening Forms, and on Attachment 3, TRS Screening Forms crosswalk; and
- ensuring customers have access to information about each program's status with Texas Rising Star, including initial probationary periods.

Issue 4: Continuous Quality Improvement Framework

During the workgroup review of Texas Rising Star measures, some measures were recommended for removal from the scoring criteria due to challenges with obtaining valid, consistent scores that demonstrated variability of quality level. However, the workgroup noted that many of these measures, as well as other focus areas not currently measured, are important to providing high-quality child care. The workgroup recommended that TWC develop a framework for Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIPs).

Early childhood programs and their mentors use CQIPs to identify areas for program and staff improvement. CQIPs provide targeted technical assistance and customized coaching to set specific improvement goals, monitor progress, and facilitate self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses.

With the additional requirements for CQIPs, and the goals of expanding Texas Rising Star to all subsidy providers, the workgroup also recommended that TWC provide Boards with increased resources to hire a sufficient number of qualified mentors.

Currently, Boards that have dedicated mentoring staff have between seven and 41 programs per mentor that are Texas Rising Star–certified or are working toward certification. On average, these Boards serve approximately 20 programs per mentor. Mentors are not currently required to implement a robust CQIP framework, so the amount of mentor contact hours with programs also varies considerably across the state.

Staff continues to research best practices and other states with robust CQIPs to determine a feasible caseload size.

Decision Point 4

Staff seeks direction on:

- amending [§809.133](#) and revising the Texas Rising Star guidelines to require all programs to participate in an online-generated CQIP that focuses on growth and evolving adherence to higher-quality standards;
- including an initial CQIP with base requirements for applying to the Texas Rising Star program; and
- determining an optimal number of Texas Rising Star mentors, with consideration given to the more robust CQIP framework, and providing the Commission with recommendations on funding needed to support this effort.

Issue 5: New Training and Certification Requirements for Texas Rising Star Staff

TWC currently defines requirements for educational background, work experience, and minimum annual training hours for Texas Rising Star mentors and assessors. However, there are no uniform training requirements for mentors or assessors to learn the standards and how to measure them.

As part of the Texas Rising Star Implementation Study, CLI developed a Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification, including coursework and the framework for ongoing reliability checks for maintaining certification. The workgroup developed several recommendations regarding Texas Rising Star assessor and mentor training and certification to ensure valid and consistent star-level certifications across all Texas Rising Star programs and to improve mentoring and coaching in support of the continuous quality improvement framework.

The workgroup recommended that Texas Rising Star assessors be required to take the Texas Rising Star standards training and to attain the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification. The workgroup also recommended that TWC support the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification

program by conducting quarterly reliability checks and facilitating peer-learning communities so that assessors may regularly reflect on their own practice and to ensure inter-rater reliability across the state. (See Attachment 1.)

Additionally, the workgroup recommended more robust training for mentors. Increasing the number of programs that attain and retain higher levels of quality will require strong mentoring support. Furthermore, successful implementation of a continuous quality improvement framework depends on skillful coaching from Texas Rising Star mentors.

The workgroup recommended that Texas Rising Star mentors be required to take the Texas Rising Star standards training. Additionally, TWC can build on a coaching credential framework that CLI developed for the Texas School Ready program. This credential can be expanded to develop a Texas Rising Star mentor micro-credential that would help improve the quality of mentoring throughout the state, including awarding badges toward meeting each of the Coaching Core Competencies. (See Attachment 1.) This micro-credential would also be supported through ongoing peer-learning communities, an evidence-based method to help educators develop and maintain key competencies.

During the public stakeholder meetings, commenters strongly supported the workgroup's recommendations to focus on how Texas Rising Star can provide coaching supports to improve the quality of care for children and assist providers in maintaining or obtaining higher levels of quality.

Decision Point 5

Staff seeks direction on the following:

- **Mentor and Assessor Roles and Responsibilities**—Amending [§809.134](#) to define the separate roles and responsibilities of Texas Rising Star assessors and mentors, including:
 - separation of roles;
 - cross-functional collaboration and coordination; and
 - mandated reporting requirements related to licensing violations observed.
- **Texas Rising Star Standards Training**—Amending [§809.134](#) to add a new requirement for all Texas Rising Star staff to complete the Texas Rising Star Standards Training
- **Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification & Texas Rising Star Mentor Micro-Credential**
 - amending [§809.134](#) to require Texas Rising Star assessors to attain and maintain the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification; and
 - amending [§809.134](#) to add new requirements for Texas Rising Star mentors to pursue the coaching micro-credential through the attainment of competency badges over a time period defined by TWC;
 - including the use of \$450,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 Statewide Initiatives budget, for the Commission's future consideration, to support the development of the Texas Rising Star micro-credential system (Attachment 1); and
 - including \$750,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 Statewide Initiatives budget, for the Commission's future consideration, to support the ongoing annual costs for

supporting and maintaining the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification system and the Texas Rising Star Mentor micro-credential system (Attachment 1).

Issue 6: Streamlining and Reweighting Categories of Texas Rising Star Measures

Section [809.130](#) defines the five categories of Texas Rising Star measures defined by previous Texas Rising Star guidelines development efforts. Texas Rising Star categories currently are: (1) Director and Staff Qualifications and Training, (2) Caregiver-Child Interactions, (3) Curriculum, (4) Nutrition and Indoor and Outdoor Activities, and (5) Parent Involvement and Education.

The workgroup found that many of the current measures are repetitive across categories or not well-correlated to the category being measured. The workgroup recommends reorganizing measures under the following four categories: (1) Director and Staff Qualifications and Training, (2) Teacher-Child Interactions, (3) Program Administration, and (4) Indoor/Outdoor Environments.

The workgroup also discussed the relative assigned weight each of these categories has in determining a program's Texas Rising Star star level. The workgroup recognized the importance of teacher-child interactions in child development, also noting that CLI's Strengthening Texas Rising Star Implementation Study found that they were able to establish validity and reach reliability for measures within this category. The workgroup recommended that this category be assigned a weight of 40 percent, with the remaining three categories weighted at 20 percent each.

Decision Point 6

Staff seeks direction on:

- amending [§809.130\(d\)\(1\)\(A\)–\(E\)](#) to denote that Texas Rising Star measures align with the four categories proposed by the workgroup; and
- weighting Category 2 (Teacher-Child Interactions) at 40 percent and all remaining categories at 20 percent.

Issue 7: Revisions to Various Texas Rising Star Measures and Processes

The workgroup had several recommendations regarding Texas Rising Star measures and processes. Their recommendations regarding specific measures within each of the proposed categories are summarized in the [Texas Rising Star Four-Year Review 2019–2020 Workgroup Recommendations](#), on page 3, line 1 through page 5, line 19.

Regarding nationally accredited entities, the workgroup recommended allowing Head Start and Early Head Start programs that meet Texas Rising Star eligibility requirements to participate in Texas Rising Star as nationally accredited entities. The workgroup further recommended that all nationally accredited entities be required to not only have an assessment of Category 2 (Teacher-Child Interactions) and Category 4 (Indoor/Outdoor Environments) at annual monitoring visits and recertification, but to also require an assessment of these categories at the initial application.

The workgroup also reviewed the Texas Rising Star screening form, a requirement for Texas Rising Star eligibility, and recommended some modifications to the licensing deficiencies that

are considered, as described in the [Texas Rising Star Four-Year Review 2019–2020 Workgroup Recommendations](#), on page 2, lines 16–26.

Finally, the workgroup recommended the following changes to program assessments:

- allow for a two-week window to schedule assessment visits and allow programs to submit blackout date options within the two-week period provided;
- require all initial assessments to be full assessments of all measures; and
- no longer require programs to report major staff changes to Texas Rising Star staff or Boards (allow assessors to score any staff changes observed at the next visit).

All of these changes have been incorporated into a draft of the [Revised Texas Rising Star Guidelines](#) in Track Changes.

Decision Point 7

Staff seeks direction on:

- approving the [Revised Texas Rising Star Guidelines](#); and
- including \$733,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 Statewide Initiatives budget, for the Commission’s future consideration, to support automation changes to support revisions to the Texas Rising Star Guidelines (Attachment 1).

Issue 8: Statewide Campaign for Texas Rising Star Outreach and Education

The workgroup recommended that TWC consider efforts to better educate families on Texas Rising Star and on high-quality child care; it also recommended that TWC develop an outreach plan to emphasize family and consumer education around choosing high-quality programs and encouraging and informing programs to remain or become high-quality programs.

Decision Point 8

Staff seeks direction on developing a cost estimate for a statewide outreach campaign to educate families on Texas Rising Star and high-quality child care.

Issue 9: Timeline for Implementation

In order to provide enough time to allow Texas Rising Star mentor and assessor staff, as well as early learning programs, to become familiar with the revisions to Texas Rising Star, TWC proposes the following implementation timeline:

Commission Action	
Commission Action on Final Texas Rising Star Recommendations	July 7, 2020
Commission Action on Policy Concept for Rule Amendments	July 7, 2020
Commission Action to Publish Proposed Rules	August 2020
Commission Action to Approve Final Rules	November 2020
Rule Effective Date	January 2021
Implementation Actions	

Freeze on Texas Rising Star Applications	January 2021–March 2021
Texas Rising Star Mentor/Assessor In-Person Training (Austin)	January 2021
Texas Rising Star Mentors/Assessors Complete Online Training	January 2021–March 2021
Assessors Test for Certification	March 31, 2021
Rollout of New Texas Rising Star Guidelines	April 2021
Retraining and PLCs for Assessors Not Certified	April 2021–August 2021
Deadline for Assessors to Achieve Certification	June 31, 2021
Statewide Texas Rising Star Outreach and Consumer Education Campaign	June 2021–September 2021

1

2 **Decision Point 9**

3 Staff seeks direction on the proposed timeline for implementation of the revisions to Texas
4 Rising Star.

5 **Informational Item: Centralization of Texas Rising Star Assessment Functions**

6 In 2018 and 2019, CLI conducted the Strengthening Texas Rising Star Implementation Study,
7 which examined measure validity and rater reliability. Assessor inter-rater reliability has
8 significant implications for the fairness of quality ratings attributed to providers and the accuracy
9 of ratings communicated to families. Based on the study’s results, CLI recommended requiring
10 assessors to be accountable to a central body that certifies reliability and conducts routine
11 reliability monitoring. Given the dispersion of assessment staff members across a large and
12 diverse state, centralizing reliability certification and monitoring will help to ensure assessment
13 approaches remain aligned, and consequently, that ratings remain fair and accurate
14 representations of quality.

15 The Texas Rising Star workgroup recommended that TWC consider pursuing the consolidation
16 of Texas Rising Star assessors. Currently, each Board or the Board’s child care contractor
17 employs Texas Rising Star assessors. Through a competitive procurement, TWC would select an
18 entity to employ and oversee all Texas Rising Star assessors to support stronger inter-rater
19 reliability and the fidelity of program ratings.

20 Because this will require legislative change, staff will bring this forward for consideration as part
21 of the development of the Commission’s priorities for the Texas 87th Legislative Session.

Attachment 1

Statewide Initiatives to Support Texas Rising Star

The following projects will be included in the Fiscal Year 2021 Statewide Initiatives Budget request, for the Commission's future consideration.

Automation Changes to Support Texas Rising Star Revisions—\$733,000 One-Time Cost

The Children's Learning Center (CLI) manages Engage, the online assessment platform used by Texas Rising Star assessors to record Texas Rising Star facility and classroom assessments for all Texas Rising Star measures. Modifications to the categories and measures (reducing the categories from five to four), as well as reweighting the categories, will require corresponding automation changes within Engage.

- CLI will implement the following changes to the Texas Rising Star online assessment tool:
 - Automatically activating schools on CLI Engage and assigning schools to their appropriate Local Workforce Development Board (Board) community
 - Implementing item-level changes, including removing obsolete items and adding new items
 - Implementing new scoring calculations for individual items and category weighting
 - Adding a new Texas Rising Star Pre-Star assignment into CLI Engage and the existing Texas Rising Star event log
 - Integrating the Texas Rising Star interest form, screening form, and application with CLI Engage to support more efficient data collection and entry for providers and Texas Rising Star staff
 - Implementing a common classroom naming convention to streamline assessment scoring and technical assistance
 - Integrating the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System's (TECPDS) Texas Workforce Registry professional development reports for automatic scoring of Category 1 items
 - Supporting infrastructure for the CLI Engage platform to support new tools and integrations
- CLI will implement a new continuous quality improvement plan (CQIP) specifically designed for Texas Rising Star mentors to provide targeted technical assistance, goal setting, and resource links at the facility level. This new CQIP tool and reporting will be based on an existing tool on CLI Engage currently used by Texas School Ready and school district coaches.
- CLI will complete updates to the Texas Rising Star website, including web-based content and Texas Rising Star documents available for download, such as the Texas Rising Star Guidelines. Web and document updates will include translation into Spanish and Vietnamese, and all PDF documents will meet Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

- CLI proposes to create the following new reports and technology integration to better support Texas Rising Star staff:
 - Integration of Child Care Licensing data to create a daily report with notifications in the event log on CLI Engage when a provider exceeds the Texas Rising Star standards on licensing violations.
 - Report that integrates specific initial eligibility requirements for all providers, based on data from Child Care Licensing.
 - Implement login federation between UTHHealth and TWC, and possibly Boards (depending of technology infrastructure at the regional level), for easier access to reports and data on CLI Engage and TECPDS.

Texas Rising Star Mentors Coaching Micro-credential Project—\$450,000 for Initial Development

TWC previously funded CLI through the Strengthening Texas Rising Star Implementation project (Track 76029) to develop a Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification. Building on this foundation, the Commissioners may consider supporting the development of a Texas Rising Star Mentor coaching credential. CLI, using funds from the Texas Education Agency provided through a TWC Rider (GAA, Article VII, Rider 25, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2019)), has begun developing a coaching micro-credential aimed at Texas School Ready coaches. This foundation can be expanded to support Texas Rising Star mentors.

The current CLI coaching credential is composed of three micro-credentials and is designed to award badges to users based on successful demonstration of the individual competencies via submissions of videos and other artifacts. This proposed development project will enhance the existing coaching credential to incorporate additional resources aligned with the Texas Rising Star mentoring role, as well as technology integrations with TECPDS. Upon completion, TWC may choose to make this coaching credential a requirement for Texas Rising Star mentors.

- CLI will publish modified coaching competencies, contextualized to Texas Rising Star.
- CLI will develop coaching competency overview online courses for each of the competency areas, to be included with the coaching credential on CLI Engage. The courses will include exemplar video demonstrations of each competency, which provide a resource for Texas Rising Star mentors as they learn about the competencies and complete competency demonstrations for badges.
- CLI will develop additional submission assignments for competency demonstration aligned with Texas Rising Star goals, including submissions related to supporting directors and discussing Texas Rising Star assessment results and use of Texas Rising Star-specific CQI framework.
- CLI will enhance the existing technology integration between CLI Engage and TECPDS to develop a new specialist role in the Texas Workforce Registry and enabling Texas Rising Star mentors to link their CLI Engage account, and all professional development and badges earned on CLI Engage, to their personal specialist accounts on TECPDS.
- CLI will partner with TWC to develop collateral materials for change management, so all Boards and Texas Rising Star staff are notified of the new coaching credential and desired program expectations for staff completion.

Ongoing Support for Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification and for Texas Rising Star Mentor Micro-credentials—\$750,000 per Year

CLI will use funds for the ongoing support of the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification and the Texas Rising Star Mentor Micro-credential. To ensure ongoing skill development for Texas Rising Star assessors and mentors, funds would also support ongoing Peer-Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs are an evidence-based method to help educators develop and maintain key competencies. Through PLCs, educators stay abreast of current best practices and regularly reflect on their own practice.

The Texas Rising Star Standards Training and Certification Program includes several components designed to support Texas Rising Star assessors and mentors to become certified on the Texas Rising Star assessment, support assessors in maintaining reliability over time, and support mentors. The program's tiered training plan coordinates additional support with online training content, ensuring that Texas Rising Star assessors and mentors have opportunities to achieve and maintain role-based expectations.

The program's design optimizes remote, web-based delivery to offer opportunities for more efficient staff training over time. It provides both mentors and assessors training related to the program guidelines and the categories contained within the Texas Rising Star assessment, along with specialized ongoing support for the specific roles of assessor and mentor. Standardizing training and certifying staff ensures that the Texas Rising Star certification process is reliable and credible across the state. The training and certification program includes a tiered approach of learning and practice through self-study online modules, small-group facilitated sessions for additional support, and individualized support for staff needing one-on-one assistance.

- Initial training and certification on the Texas Rising Star assessment
- Ongoing quarterly reliability training for Texas Rising Star assessors to maintain reliability over time
- Ongoing PLCs for Texas Rising Star mentors focused on coaching and mentoring strategies and continuous quality improvement

After all Texas Rising Star assessors and mentors achieve initial reliability on the Texas Rising Star assessment, TWC will offer ongoing support to maintain reliability (assessors) and use of coaching and mentoring strategies (mentors). Quarterly reliability training is required for all assessors to maintain reliability; each quarter, all assessors will complete a coding reliability assignment on one facility type and one classroom age group, followed by a group feedback session. Texas Rising Star mentors are required to join an ongoing mentor PLC to discuss coaching and mentoring strategies, support for directors and teachers, and continuous quality improvement. CLI will develop a comprehensive monthly schedule of webinar-based collaborative PLCs for Texas Rising Star mentors and assessors. CLI also will host the PLC and include regular video evaluation on assessor and mentor practices, which is based on CLI's research-based reflection process of observation, goal-setting, and taking action to support continuous improvement.

- CLI will develop a monthly schedule for PLCs to meet, targeting specific needs of Texas Rising Star mentors and supporting their ongoing development of the coaching

competencies and completion of the coaching credential. The number of PLCs will be determined based on the number of Texas Rising Star mentor participants. A group of three to four mentors (optimal group size) will be assigned to each PLC, which allows multiple PLCs to be hosted each month.

- CLI staff will review competency demonstration submissions submitted by Texas Rising Star mentors working toward completion of the coaching credential. The CLI staff will award badges when a mentor successfully demonstrates competencies through the submissions (for example, videos and artifacts) or provide support to enable them to resubmit later.
- CLI will use the certificate-generation tool on TECPDS to award certificates to all PLC participants, supporting Texas Rising Star staff annual training requirements.

Attachment 2
TEXAS RISING STAR SCREENING FORM
Licensed Child Care Centers

Provider Name: _____ **Address:** _____

Director Name: _____ **License #:** _____

Texas Rising Star Pre-Star/Initial Programs	
1.	Facility has CCR licensing history for the 12-month period? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date of Review: _____ Review 12-month CCR licensing history Stop process if "No"
2.	On Corrective or Adverse Action with CCR? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No On Corrective Action with Board? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No On Notice of Freeze with TWC? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Cited for 746.3707 (b -d) by CCR? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Has 15 or more total CCR weighted High and/or Medium-High Deficiencies? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No STOP process if "Yes" for any of the above within the previous 12-months.
3.	CCR Deficiency Review Facility is unable to be Pre-Star if they have received any of the following deficiencies listed below: <input type="checkbox"/> 745.635 Criminal Convictions or Central Registry Findings – Take Appropriate Action <input type="checkbox"/> 745.641 Background Checks Requirement – Providing Direct Care <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1201(4) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers – Ensure No Child is Abused, Neglected, or Exploited <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1201(5) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers – Report Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation <input type="checkbox"/> 745.621 Background Checks Requirement <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1003 Director Responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1201(1) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers – Demonstrate Competency, Good Judgment, Self-Control <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1203(4) Responsibilities of Caregivers – Supervision of Children <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1315 First Aid and CPR Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> 746.2805 Prohibited Punishments <input type="checkbox"/> 746.3805(a) Administering Medication – How to Administer Medication <input type="checkbox"/> 746.3805(b) Administering Medication – How to Administer Medication STOP process if any of the above have been received within the previous 12-months.
<i>Place a copy of this form and screenshot of CCR licensing history within Engage Event Log for applicable status update.</i>	
Texas Rising Star Staff Signature	Date

Attachment 2
TEXAS RISING STAR SCREENING FORM FOR CURRENT PROGRAMS
Licensed Child Care Centers

Provider Name: _____ Address: _____

Director Name: _____ License #: _____

Current Texas Rising Star Programs	
1.	Facility has CCR licensing history for the 12-month period prior to the date of the TRS monitoring/recertification visit? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date of TRS Monitoring/Recertification Review: _____ Review 12-month CCR licensing history
2.	On Corrective or Adverse Action with CCR? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No On Corrective Action with Board? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No On Notice of Freeze with TWC? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Cited for 746.3707 (b -d) by CCR? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Has 15 or more total CCR weighted High and/or Medium-High Deficiencies? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Has incurred 3 rd consecutive probation (any level)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If yes, denote previous probation start dates in last 3 years:____) Has incurred 5 th probation (any level) within last 3 years? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If yes, denote previous probation start dates in last 3 years:____) Repeal certification if "Yes" for any criterion
3.	STAR LEVEL DROP Facility is dropped one-star level for <u>each occurrence</u> if they have received any of the following deficiencies listed below. 2-star facilities would lose certification. <input type="checkbox"/> 745.635 Criminal Convictions or Central Registry Findings – Take Appropriate Action <input type="checkbox"/> 745.641 Background Checks Requirement – Providing Direct Care <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1201(4) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers – Ensure No Child is Abused, Neglected, or Exploited <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1201(5) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers – Report Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation Date star level drop is effective
4.	PROBATION A Facility is placed on Probation A if they have <u>any</u> of the following deficiencies listed below: <input type="checkbox"/> 745.621 Background Checks Requirement <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1003 Director Responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1201(1) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers – Demonstrate Competency, Good Judgment, Self-Control <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1203(4) Responsibilities of Caregivers – Supervision of Children <input type="checkbox"/> 746.1315 First Aid and CPR Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> 746.2805 Prohibited Punishments <input type="checkbox"/> 746.3805(a) Administering Medication – How to Administer Medication <input type="checkbox"/> 746.3805(b) Administering Medication – How to Administer Medication <i>If facility is cited for any Probation A deficiencies within the 6-month probation, without exceeding 14 total High and/or Medium-High deficiencies, the facility loses a star level and a 2nd 6-month Probation is established at the point of discovery. If facility is cited for any Probation A deficiencies within the second 6-month probation, facility loses certification.</i> Date probation is effective Denote which probation: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd
4b.	PROBATION B Facility who has 10 to 14 total CCR weighted High and/or Medium-High deficiencies only, is placed on Probation B. Total number of High and/or Medium-High Deficiencies <i>If any additional CCR weighted High and/or Medium-High deficiencies are incurred but do not exceed 14 total, within this 6-month probation, the provider loses a star level for 6-months and a 2nd 6-month Probation is established at the point of discovery. If new High and/or Medium-High deficiencies are incurred within the second 6-month probation, facility loses certification.</i> Date Probation is effective Denote which probation: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd
For any facility on a 6-month star level reduction, no additional deficiencies denoted in section 3 or 4 can be incurred within that 6-month timeframe in order to be reinstated at the previous certified star level.	
Place a copy of this form and screenshot of CCR licensing history within Engage Event Log for applicable status update.	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Texas Rising Star Staff Signature Date </div>	